

## Message Text

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ACTION OES-06

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 EA-07 ISO-00 FEA-01 ACDA-07 AGRE-00  
AID-05 CEA-01 CEQ-01 CG-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 DLOS-06  
DODE-00 DOTE-00 EB-08 EPA-01 ERDA-05 FMC-01 TRSE-00  
H-01 INR-07 INT-05 IO-13 JUSE-00 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05  
NSF-01 OMB-01 PA-01 PM-04 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06  
SAL-01 /128 W

-----050057Z 032965 /14

P R 040848Z MAR 77  
FM AMEMBASSY SEOUL  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2468  
INFO AMEMBASSY TOKYO  
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

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EO 11652: N/A  
TAGS: EFIS UR KS US JA  
SUBJ: MEDIA TREATMENT OF FISHERIES ISSUES

REF: SEOUL 1659, SEOUL 1446, TOKYO 2727

1. ROK NON-TRADE MEDIA ATTENTION TO FISHERIES ISSUES HAS GRADUALLY INCREASED SINCE THE INITIALING OF THE US-ROK GIFA ON JANUARY 4, 1977, WITH VIRTUALLY EVERY OUTLET FOLLOWING UP NEWS BREAKS WITH EDITORIALS POINTING TO A DIRE FUTURE FOR KOREAN FISHERMEN AND EXHORTING ROKG TO EXPAND INTERNATIONAL COOPERATIVE EFFORTS TO ASSURE CONTINUED ACCESS TO EXISTING GOURNDS AS WELL AS TO DEVELOP NEW ONES.

2. SOVIET DECLARATION RE ENFORCEMENT OF ITS ZONE FROM MARCH, COUPLED WITH TRANSMISSION OF US PRELIMINARY QUOTAS TO ROK ON FEBRUARY 14, PROJECTED FISHERY NEWS TO FRONT PAGES AND DAILY LEAD ARTICLE PLACEMENT BY  
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ONE JOURNAL OR ANOTHER. AS SUGGESTED SEOUL'S REFTELS, RELEASE OF FIGURES, HOWEVER GENEROUS, TOTALLING LESS THAN THE 90,000 TONS OFFICIALLY EXPECTED SHORTLY BEFORE THE ANNOUNCEMENT AND AT ABOUT ONE-HALF OF THE AMOUNT FORMALLY REQUESTED BY THE ROKG, LOOSED A BARRAGE OF EDITORIAL CRITICISM AGAINST KOREAN GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS. MOST COMMON ACCUSATIONS AGAINST FOREIGN MINISTRY AND

OFFICE OF FISHERIES OFFICIALS WERE BASED ON THEIR NOT BEING MORE FORESIGHTED AND/OR ACTIVE, EFFECTIVE AND IMAGINATIVE IN REPRESENTING KOREA'S NEEDS. THE US CAME IN FOR ITS SHARE OF CRITICISM AS THE CATALYST FOR ESTABLISHMENT OF 200 MILE ZONES BY OTHER COUNTRIES, MOST NOTABLY THE USSR AND/OR FOR GIVING ALL THE QUOTA TO JAPAN AND THE USSR AND LITTLE TO KOREA. KYONGHYANG SHIMUN ALSO "APPEALED" TO THE SOVIETS AND HOPED THAT, DESPITE THE HINDRANCE OF THE "PUPPET NK REGIME", THE USSR WOULD EVENTUALLY TAKE A FAIR STANCE ON ACCESS TO OCEAN FISHING RESOURCES. ONE TV STATION (MBC) SOURCED WASHINGTON IN REPORTING A 200,000 TON ROK QUOTA JUST A DAY AFTER THE 78,700 TOTAL WAS PRESENTED, AND TWO NEWSPAPERS (DONG A ILBO AND KYONGHYANG SINMUN) EDITORIALIZED UPON THE MISUNDERSTANDING THAT THE US QUOTA REPRESENTED ONLY 4.6 PERCENT OF THE ROK'S PAST CATCHES IN ALASKAN WATERS.

4. WHEN PRESENTED WITH THE UNFORESEEN CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE US APPLYING THE QUOTA FROM JANUARY 1, 1977 AS WELL AS THE DELAY IN COMPLETION OF THE US INTERNAL PROCEDURES, FOREIGN MINISTRY OFFICIALS ATTEMPTED TO DIRECT MEDIA ATTENTION TO THE SOVIET SITUATION. THEY DISCUSSED THEIR WITHDRAWAL ORDER TO KOREAN VESSELS OFF KAMCHATKA; BACKGROUNDED THE FACT THAT THE US WAS BEING "VERY HELPFUL" IN THEIR EFFORTS TO ESTABLISH CONTACT WITH THE USSR; AND HIGHLIGHTED ROKG ENCOURAGEMENT OF UNSPECIFIED "JOINT FISHING VENTURES" TO ASSURE ACCESS TO OTHER COUNTRIES' CONSERVATION ZONES.

5. IT WAS NOT UNTIL MARCH 4 THAT CLEAR MEDIA REPORTS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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EMERGED THAT THERE HAD BEEN A SUSPENSION OF US ZONE FISHING SINCE MIDNIGHT OF FEBRUARY 28 AND THAT THE QUOTA CALCULATION WOULD BE BASED ON THE CALENDAR YEAR. THE OFFICE OF FISHERIES WAS REPORTED TO HAVE BEEN "UNABLE TO ANSWER" QUESTIONS ON WHY JAPANESE VESSELS WERE PERMITTED TO RESUME FISHING A FEW HOURS AHEAD OF KOREAN VESSELS, BUT REPORTS THAT ROK FISHING HAD RESUMED OBIATED THAT QUESTION.

6. TOGETHER WITH WASHINGTON AND SEOUL DATELINED REPORTS, MEDIA HAVE ALSO CARRIED VIRTUALLY ALL WIRE SERVICE DESPATCHES FROM MOSCOW AND TOKYO CONCERNING SOVIET-JAPAN FISHERY DEVELOPMENTS.

7. EMBASSY COMMENT: USIS AND EMBASSY OFFICERS IN RESPONDING TO INQUIRES AND DISTRIBUTING WIRELESS FILE INFORMATION, HAVE TAKEN EVERY OPPORTUNITY TO CORRECT MISINFORMATION AND TO INTRODUCE AS MUCH OBJECTIVITY AS POSSIBLE. CONSIDERING THE PRACTICAL IMPACT WHICH THE CREATION OF US, SOVIET AND OTHER CONSERVATION ZONES CAN

HAVE FOR THE KOREAN FISHING INDUSTRY AND FOOD SUPPLY, PRICES,  
AND EMPLOYMENT LEVEL OF THE LOW WAGE FISHERY WORKFORCE,  
REMARKABLY LITTLE OPEN PUBLIC REACTION HAS DEVELOPED THUS FAR.  
STERN

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## Message Attributes

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